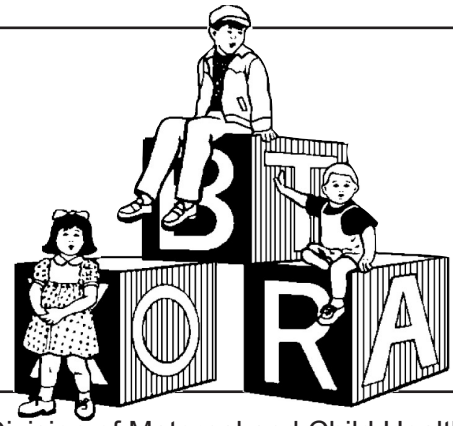


Building Blocks to Safety

A newsletter for prevention of childhood injuries



North Dakota Department of Health

Winter 2002

Division of Maternal and Child Health

Winter Play Safety

Winter can be a wonderful time for play. Participating in winter sports will help keep the whole family healthy, but injuries can spoil the fun. Here's how to keep kids safe during winter play.

Clothing for outdoor play:

All winter activities require warm, dry clothing. To prevent frostbite, children should be dressed in warm clothes, including:

- **A hat** – A hat should be warm and close-fitting and should cover the ear lobes; it should not be a fashion hat or baseball cap.
- **Mittens** – Gloves do not keep hands warm as effectively as mittens.
- **Loose layers** – Wear absorbent, synthetic fabric next to skin, a warmer middle layer and a water-resistant/repellent outer layer.
- **Socks** -- A single pair of socks, either wool or a wool blend (with silk or polypropylene), is better than cotton, which offers no insulation when wet. Avoid extra thick socks as they can cause cold feet by restricting blood flow and air circulation around the toes.
- **Boots** – Make sure boots are dry and not too tight.

Children should get out of wet clothes and shoes as quickly as possible, as they are the biggest factors in frostbite. Jackets should be zipped up. To avoid strangulation during play, use tube-shaped neck warmers instead of scarves. If scarves must be used, tuck them into jackets. Remove drawstrings on hoods and jackets because they are also a safety hazard; better yet, buy clothes without drawstrings.

Outdoor Sport Safety Tips

Downhill Skiing:

- Beginners should take lessons from a certified instructor.
- A ski helmet is recommended to prevent head injury.
- Skiers should follow the buddy system. Never ski alone.
- Always check your child's ski equipment to make sure it is in good condition and fits properly. Binding should be checked at least once a year by a qualified technician or ski shop. Bindings, boots and skis that do not fit properly or are not properly adjusted are a significant risk factor for young skiers.
- Do warm-up exercises and stretches before each day's skiing.
- Skiers need to stay on marked trails and follow other rules of the slopes.
- Skiers should choose runs or trails that best suit their ability. Before they start out, skiers should understand the signs used to indicate level of difficulty.
- Skiers should stay alert to hazards such as rocks, trees, ice patches and changes in weather and visibility.
- Skiers should dress against frostbite, make sure boots are not too tight and wear sunglasses or goggles with UV protection to guard against the reflection of the sun off the snow. They should also wear sunscreen to protect against sunburns.



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Outdoor Sport Safety Tips, continued

- Skiers should quit before they get tired and before it gets dark.

Ice Hockey:

- Hockey players should wear an approved hockey helmet with a compatible full-face mask.
- Helmets should be replaced every five years. They are designed to withstand falls on ice and the multiple impacts expected during hockey play, but they have a recommended limit.
- Other recommended protective gear includes gloves, shoulder pads, elbow pads, shin pads, mouth guards and (for boys) an athletic support.
- Ensure that all protective equipment is in good condition and fits properly.
- Inspect helmets regularly. Do not use a helmet with a cracked or severely scratched shell or a worn liner.
- Never alter a helmet. It may affect its ability to prevent injury.
- No amount of equipment can prevent all injuries. Children need to play by the rules.
- Stretching and warm-ups prior to each practice and game, as well as a cool-down routine, will help to prevent injuries.
- Teach children to skate heads-up when approaching the boards to prevent neck injuries.
- Take head injuries seriously. Players should get a physician's permission to return to play after suffering a concussion.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting checking in hockey players age 15 and younger as a means to reduce injuries.



shape without bumps and melting or slushy ice. Check for skating hazards such as pebbles, rocks and branches.

- Ice on frozen ponds, rivers, lakes or canals should be at least 6 inches thick. Beware of quick thaws that can weaken the ice surface.
- Teach children to skate with friends and never alone.

Sledding:

- Ensure that the hill is free of hazards such as trees, rocks, bumps, fences and bare spots. Do not sled on ice-covered areas.
- Ensure that the hill is situated away from roads, rivers or railroads and that there is plenty of room to stop at the bottom of the hill.
- Look for a hill that is not too steep (less than 30 degrees is recommended for children) and has a long, clear runoff area.
- Use only proper sliding equipment with good brakes and steering. Inner tubes and plastic discs are not recommended because they are difficult to control.
- Many sledding injuries are cold related, such as frostbite and hypothermia. Heat loss is particularly significant in children younger than 3 because their heads account for a larger

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Visit the following websites for more information about product safety and injury prevention:

www.cpsc.gov

<http://www.health.state.nd.us>

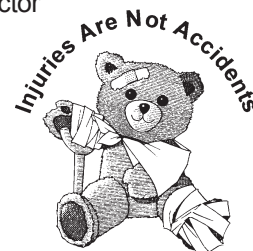
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This newsletter can be accessed at
[www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/pubs/index.htm#Building Blocks](http://www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/pubs/index.htm#Building%20Blocks)



Outdoor Safety Tips, continued

proportion of their overall body size. Children should be dressed warmly in layers.

- After sledding, children should get out of wet clothes and boots quickly to prevent frostbite.
- Young children always should be supervised by an adult. They should never slide alone.
- The safest position for sledding is kneeling. Sliding on your stomach, headfirst, offers the least protection from a head injury. Lying flat on the back increases the risk of injuring the spine or spinal cord.
- Teach children to move quickly to the side and walk up and away from the sliding path after finishing a run.
- Children should not toboggan at night.
- Head injuries while sledding can be serious. Children should wear a helmet with a thin, warm cap underneath to protect ears from frostbite. A ski or hockey helmet is recommended because they are designed for use in cold weather and for similar falls and speeds.

Snowboarding:

- Snowboarding requires its own set of skills. Beginners should take lessons from a certified snowboard instructor.
- Snowboarders should follow all the safety tips for downhill skiers.
- Helmets are recommended for snowboarding.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children younger than 7 should not try snowboarding.
- Snowboarders should use only boards with full-length steel edges and stiff, secure bindings. The board leash should be securely attached. Children should use short boards (no more than chest high).
- Snowboarders should be especially careful on the first and last few runs of the day, when injuries are most common.
- Snowboarders should be aware that high speeds and aerial maneuvers carry a high risk for injury.

Based on information from Safe Kids Canada, 2002: www.safekidscanda.ca. Safe Tips hotline: 1.888.SAFE.TIPS.

Toy Chests Recalled



In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), XL Machine Ltd. is voluntarily recalling about 3,300 toy chests. Screws in the chests' lid support hinges can loosen

over time and come out from the base of the toy chests. If this happens, the lids of the toy chests can collapse suddenly, possibly causing injuries to children's heads, necks, fingers or hands.

The blue toy chests measure 18.5 inches by 12 inches by 12 inches and were sold under the Playskool brand name. On the top of the toy chest lid are depictions of Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head characters and the PLAYSKOOL logo. The front panel has a Glow Worm figure and a dog.

Target stores sold the toy chests nationwide from October 2001 through December 2001. Consumers should take these toy chests away from young children immediately and return them to the Target store where purchased for a refund or store credit. For more information, contact XL Machine toll-free at 866.746.8097.

Caterpillar Toy Recalled

BRIO Corp. and CPSC voluntarily are recalling about 1,000 of the Plan Toys pull-along caterpillars. The antenna on the pull toy can detach, posing a choking hazard to young children.

The pull-along caterpillar is bright red and yellow and was sold under the Plan Toys brand name. The wooden caterpillar is about 7-inches long and is pulled by a nylon string. The caterpillar's antennae are two blue protruding pegs that extend about one-half inch from the head. The recalled lot numbers are 0645917, 12142323 and 0724423 and are printed on the inside flap of the packaging. A stamp on the top of the tail end of the caterpillar displays the Plan Toys logo.

Specialty toy stores, Internet retailers and mail order catalogs sold the caterpillar toys nationwide from January 2002 through September 2002.

Consumers should take these caterpillar toys away from children and call 888.274.6869 for more information.



Skateboard Ramps Recalled

Gen-X Sports Inc. and CPSC voluntarily are recalling about 88,000 skateboard ramps. The ramps can crack, causing users to fall and suffer injuries.

The recalled ramps include the Rage SSD (model 310937) and Skate Attack SSD (model 312912). The ramps are black and have a sticker with the Rage or Skate Attack logo and name on each side. The four peg holes, used to anchor the ramp, are located on the underside of the ramp in each corner. The ramps are 39-inches long, 28-inches wide and as high as 12 inches.

Discount stores and sports stores sold the ramps nationwide from March 2002 through September 2002. Consumers should stop using these ramps immediately and contact Gen-X toll-free at 866.846.4369 for information on returning the ramps and to receive a refund.



Kidz Club Flashlights Recalled



Eveready Battery Co., in cooperation with the CPSC, voluntarily is recalling about 24,000 Kidz Club flashlights sold under its Energizer brand. The flashlights can overheat and cause the batteries to leak, posing a risk of burns to children.

The multicolored flashlights measure about 5.57 inches in length and are made with a metal barrel and a plastic head. They

take C batteries and have a rotating focusing head. The model number FC230KBP appears only on the reverse side of the package. The words Energizer Kidz Club appear on the head of the flashlight.

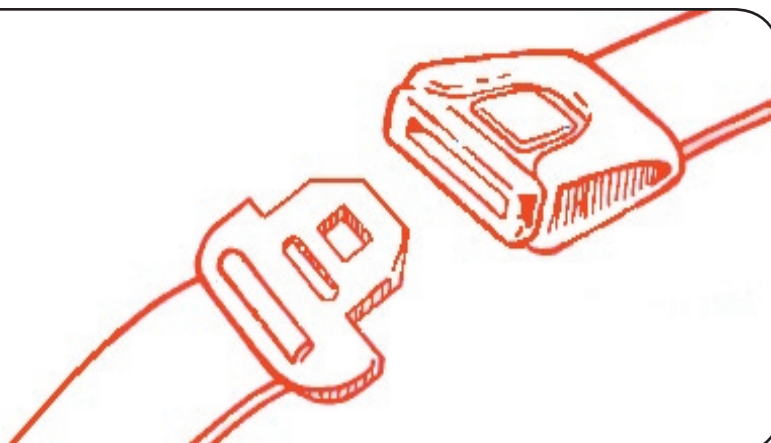
Discount department and toy stores sold these flashlights nationwide from April 2002 through October 2002. Consumers should take these flashlights away from children immediately and remove the batteries. Consumers should contact Eveready at 800.669.6394 for instructions on returning the flashlights and to receive a \$12 refund.

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The Buckle Update



Seat Belt Use Up in North Dakota

More North Dakotans are using seat belts, according to observation surveys conducted by the North Dakota Department of Transportation. In 2001, North Dakota's seat belt use rate was 57.9 percent. In 2002, the state rate was 63.4 percent.

The survey was conducted in 16 counties by DLN Consulting Inc. of Dickinson. Observers looked for drivers and passengers wearing shoulder belts in cars, vans, pickups and sports utility vehicles. The survey was conducted on state, federal and interstate highways.

North Dakota's seat belt use is still below the national average of 75 percent.



2003 Child Passenger Safety Courses Scheduled

The North Dakota Department of Health has scheduled three 32-hour child passenger safety courses that allow participants to become certified as child passenger safety technicians. The dates and locations are:

May 6-9 Bismarck
June 24-27 Fargo
August 19-22 Bismarck

Target audiences for the course include health care providers, Safe Communities program staff, child care providers, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel,

automobile dealership personnel, Head Start program staff and others interested in the safe transportation of children.

Participants will learn the basics of child restraints and their proper installation in vehicles. They also will learn best practice advice to share with families about safe transportation of their infants, toddlers and young children.

For more information, contact Carol Holzer or Dawn Mayer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 1.800.472.2286 (press 1).





American Academy of Pediatrics Revises Child Restraint Recommendations



In March 2002, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued its revised policy statement, "Selecting and Using the Most Appropriate Car Safety Seats for Growing Children: Guidelines for Counseling Parents."

The revised statement covers issues such as keeping infants rear-facing up to at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds. It advises keeping children older than 1 rear-facing until reaching the maximum weight for the car safety seat, as long as the top of the head is below the top of the seat back.

The statement emphasizes booster seat use until lap

and shoulder belts fit correctly, and continues to advise against the use of shield boosters for children of any size. It warns against the use of after-market add-on products that claim to solve the problem of poor-fitting seat belts.

In their statement, the AAP reminds pediatricians that child occupant protection laws in many states may not reflect the safest way to transport children, and they encourage physicians to counsel parents on AAP recommendations for best child passenger restraint. For the complete text, see the AAP website, www.aap.org/family/cps.htm.

Advanced Airbags

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is requiring a 2004 model year phase-in of "advanced" or "smart" airbags to help protect children and very small adults from airbag-related injuries and deaths. Automakers have been studying ways to make front passenger airbags that are safer for children but still protect adults.

New technology will use various types of sensors that will identify the weight of the person in the seat and whether or not a child safety seat is in use. The

advanced system will turn off the airbag if it detects a child in a car safety seat. The system will involve two separate sensors – one in the seat cushion and one in the seat belt. A computer control mechanism then will make a decision about airbag deployment.

While the system will meet the government's new airbag rule, auto manufacturers are stressing that no system is foolproof, and they will continue to recommend that children 12 and younger ride in the back seat, properly restrained.

Congress Approves Auto Safety Rules for Older Children

A bill recently approved by Congress will set federal standards for children who weigh more than 50 pounds, will require auto manufacturers to install shoulder belts in rear center seats and will promote research about how best to protect older children.

The legislation is known as "Anton's Law," named for a 4-year-old who was killed in 1996 when an adult seat belt failed to hold him in a crash. In the child passenger field, children ages 4 to 8 often are called the "forgotten children" because they are too old for conventional child seats, yet their bodies are not big enough to be protected effectively by adult seat belts. The legislation hopes to close that loophole.

One of the main provisions of the bill would require automakers to install a combination lap and shoulder belt in the rear center seat of all new vehicles

beginning in 2005. The middle of the back seat is statistically the safest place for a child to ride, but most vehicles have only a lap belt there. A booster seat cannot be used effectively without a shoulder belt.

The legislation also would direct the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to establish new auto safety standards for booster seats for children who weigh more than 50 pounds. The agency would have to design a crash dummy representing an 80-pound, 10-year-old child and incorporate it into vehicle safety testing.

The bill also authorizes \$5 million for research into whether child seats that are built into a vehicle would prevent more injuries than the seats that parents now have to install.

